

## Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 CANBER 02012 040929Z

51

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 EB-11 DRC-01 /116 W

----- 080127

R 040900Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2932

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CANBERRA 2012

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJECT: DOUBLE DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT APPEARS IMMINENT

1. SUMMARY: DOUBLE DISSOLUTION OF AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT NOW SUDDENLY APPEARS IMMINENT. IN PRESS CONFERENCE AND STATEMENT IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES APRIL 4, LIBERAL OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN STATED LIBERAL AND COUNTRY PARTIES WOULD OPPOSE REMAINING APPROPRIATIONS BILLS IN HOUSE. HE SAID THAT IF OPPOSITION PARTIES IN SENATE ALSO OPPOSE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS, GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FORCED TO DOUBLE DISSOLUTION AND EARLY ELECTIONS. WHITLAM TOOK UP CHALLENGE, STATING THAT IF SENATE REJECTED APPROPRIATIONS BILLS, HE WOULD ASK GOVERNOR GENERAL TO DISSOLVE BOTH HOUSES AND ISSUE WRITS OF ELECTION FOR BOTH HOUSES ON MAY 18. STAGE IS ALMOST SET FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS, BUT FINAL STEP REMAINS TO BE TAKEN BY SENATE. END SUMMARY.

2. AT PRESS CONFERENCE IN CANBERRA AFTERNOON OF APRIL 4 (LOCAL TIME) LIBERAL OPPOSITION LEADER SNEDDEN ANNOUNCED COMBINED OPPOSITION HAD DECIDED TO PRESS FOR DISSOLUTION OF BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT (I.E., DOUBLE DISSOLUTION) AND EARLY NATIONAL  
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 CANBER 02012 040929Z

ELECTIONS.

3. SNEDDEN FOLLOWED UP PRESS CONFERENCE WITH OBVIOUSLY WELL-  
PREPARED SPEECH IN VERY STORMY SESSION OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
LATER IN AFTERNOON, STATING THAT LIBERAL AND COUNTRY PARTIES IN  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WOULD REJECT REMAINING APPROPRIATIONS  
BILLS BEFORE IT. HE SAID THAT IF, IN SENATE, ALL MEMBERS OF  
LIBERAL, COUNTRY, AND DEMOCRATIC LABOR PARTIES ALSO OPPOSE  
REMAINING APPROPRIATIONS BILLS, GOVERNMENT MUST GO TO AN ELECTION,  
DISSOLVING BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT. SNEDDEN SAID THAT, IF  
DOUBLE DISSOLUTION ORDERED, OPPOSITION PARTIES WOULD MAKE  
SUBSEQUENT, SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPROVING PENDING  
APPROPRIATIONS BILLS TO PERMIT GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS TO CONTINUE.  
SNEDDEN UNDERTOOK SYSTEMATIC DENUNCIATION OF GOVERNMENT'S  
HANDLING OF INFLATION AND OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICIES IN  
GENERAL.

4. IN REPLY PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM SAID THAT IF SENATE REJECTS  
ANY MONEY BILL, IT WILL BE FIRST TIME SENATE WOULD HAVE REJECTED  
MONEY BILL IN HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES,  
HE CONTINUED, HE WOULD ADVISE GOVERNOR GENERAL TO DISSOLVE BOTH  
HOUSE AND SENATE AND ISSUE WRITS OF ELECTION FOR BOTH HOUSES ON  
MAY 18. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT UNTIL SENATE HAS REJECTED  
APPROPRIATIONS BILL, THERE WOULD BE NO GROUNDS FOR ASKING  
GOVERNOR GENERAL TO DISSOLVE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. WHITLAM  
SAID IT WAS TIME TO HAVE A CONTEMPORARY PARLIAMENT, RATHER THAN  
HAVE MAJOR LEGISLATION DELAYED OR REJECTED BY SENATE, SOME OF  
WHOSE MEMBERS ELECTED IN 1967.

5. COMMENT: SITUATION AT THIS POINT HAS NOT ENTIRELY CLARIFIED,  
BUT IT SEEMS CLEAR FROM STATEMENTS OF BOTH SNEDDEN AND PRIME  
MINISTER THAT DOUBLE DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT IS VERY CLOSE.  
SNEDDEN WAS NOT MERELY BEING CONSIDERATE OF SENATE IN STATING  
THAT IF OPPOSITION PARTIES IN SENATE OPPOSE REMAINING APPROPRI-  
ATIONS BILLS, GOVERNMENT MUST GO TO AN ELECTION, DISSOLVING BOTH  
HOUSES. ANDREW PEACOCK, LIBERAL SPOKESMAN FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
HAD TOLD AMBASSADOR EARLIER APRIL 4 THAT OPPOSITION PARTIES WERE  
PRESSING FOR DOUBLE DISSOLUTION BUT THAT SEVERAL SENATORS  
(UNIDENTIFIED) WERE WAVERING. PEACOCK WAS CONFIDENT THAT  
OPPOSITION PARTIES IN SENATE WOULD COME AROUND.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 CANBER 02012 040929Z

6. OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE CLEARLY BANKING ON GENERAL IMPRESSION  
CREATED BY STRING OF ALP LOSSES IN STATE ELECTIONS IN LAST YEAR  
OR SO (VICTORIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA),  
CONTINUING TREND OF PUBLIC OPINION POLLS ADVERSE TO LABOR  
GOVERNMENT, AND IN PARTICULAR DISARRAY AND CONFUSION IN ALP AND  
LABOR GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING APPOINTMENT OF SENATOR GAIR AS  
AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND.

7. IN INITIAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITON, FOCUS HAS BEEN ALMOST ENTIRELY ON DOMESTIC ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ISSUES, THOUGH SNEDDEN INDICATED IN HIS SPEECH THAT HE WOULD BE SPEAKING TO DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS QUESTIONS AT A LATER STAGE.

GREEN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** LAW, POLITICAL LEADERS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, APPROPRIATIONS, ELECTIONS, PRESS CONFERENCES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 04 APR 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974CANBER02012  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740075-1132  
**From:** CANBERRA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19740466/aaaacifx.tel  
**Line Count:** 121  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 08 JUL 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <08 JUL 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <01 AUG 2002 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** DOUBLE DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT APPEARS IMMINENT  
**TAGS:** PINT, AS, (SNEDDEN)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005